AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for inspecting objects, the method comprising:

creating a reference image for a representative object, said reference image comprising an at least partially vectorized first representation of boundaries ~~within the image~~ representing said representative object;

acquiring an image of an object under inspection comprising a second representation of boundaries ~~within said image~~ representating said object under inspection; and

comparing a location of at least some boundaries in the second representation of boundaries to a location of corresponding boundaries in said at least partially vectorized first representation of boundaries, thereby to identify defects.

2. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein the comparing ~~step~~ employs a user-selected variable threshold for acceptable distance between corresponding portions of the boundaries in the first and second representations.

3. (Currently Amended) A system for image processing comprising:

a boundary identifier operative to generate a representation of boundaries of known elements in the image;

a hardware candidate defect identifier operative to identify at least some candidate defects in the image, in hardware; and

a software candidate defect inspector receiving an output from the hardware candidate defect identifier and ~~using the~~ analyzing a location of boundaries in said representation of boundaries to identify at least one false alarm within said output, in software.

4. (Original) A system according to claim 3 wherein the boundary identifier comprises a hardware boundary identifier operative to generate a representation of boundaries of known elements in the image, in hardware.

5. (Original) A system according to claim 3 and also comprising a software candidate defect identifier operative to identify additional candidate defects in the image, in software.

6. (Original) A system according to claim 5 wherein the software candidate defect inspector also receives a second output from the software candidate defect identifier and uses the representation of boundaries to identify at least one false alarm within said second output, in software.

7. (Original) A system according to claim 3 wherein said hardware candidate defect identifier employs said representation of boundaries in order to identify at least some candidate defects.

8. (Original) A system according to claim 5 wherein said software candidate defect identifier employs said representation of boundaries in order to identify at least some candidate defects.

9. – 33.   (Canceled)